

Message Text

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20

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 GAC-01 RSR-01 /141 W

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R 010912 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9462

INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJ: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET SESSION: FIRST WEEK

REF: ISLAMABAD 4264

SUMMARY: FIRST WEEK OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET SESSION
DEVOTED LARGELY TO UNPRODUCTIVE BICKERING
BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION, WITH LATTER CRITI-
CIZING GOVERNMENT ACTIONS IN BALUCHISTAN AND AZAD
KASHMIR. GOVERNMENT REVEALED INTENTIONS TRY FORMER
PRESIDENT YAHYA AFTER PAK POWS IN INDIA RETURNED. SOME
SPECULATION IN CAPITAL THAT BHUTTO HAS SHELVED PLANS FOR
EARLY ELECTIONS BECAUSE OF POPULAR DISCONTENT OVER
CONTINUING PRICE SPIRAL. END SUMMARY.

1. LITTLE LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS WAS ACCOMPLISHED DURING
FIRST WEEK OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET SESSION AS SERIES
OF PRIVILEGE AND ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS TOOK UP MOST OF
THE PROCEEDINGS. IN MEETINGS MARKED BY INTEMPERATE
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LANGUAGE FROM GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION AS WELL, GOP'S DISPATCH OF MILITARY PERSONNEL TO BALUCHISTAN WAS DEBATED AT SOME LENGTH AND ALONG FAMILIAR LINES. OPPOSITION ENDEAVORED UNSUCCESSFULLY TO DISCUSS ALLEGED CENTRAL GOVERNMENT MACHINATIONS AGAINST AZAD KASHMIR GOVERNMENT. AFTER VIGOROUS SPEECH BY MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN WHICH HE BEGGED THAT ASSEMBLY "NOT DISCUSS A MATTER WHICH MAY UNDERMINE OUR NEGOTIATION POSITION ON A VITAL NATIONAL ISSUE", SPEAKER HALD THAT ISSUE COULD NOT BE RAISED BECAUSE GOP HAD NO JURISDICTION REGARDING AZAD KASHMIR AFFAIRS BEYOND THAT CONTAINED IN UNCIP RESOLUTION (AZAD KASHMIR POLITICAL CONTRETEMPS DISCUSSED IN SEPTEL).

2. AMONG OTHER MATTERS CONSIDERED BY ASSEMBLY WAS CREATION OF FEDERALLY-CONTROLLED PARAMILITARY POLICE FORCE ON WHICH LIVELY DEBATE CONTINUES. DURING SESSION, GOP WENT ON RECORD WITH ITS MOST UNAMBIGUOUS COMMENTS TO DATE REGARDING OPPOSITION DEMANDS THAT FINMER PRESIDENT YAHYA BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL. LAW MINISTER PIRZADA ASSURED ASSEMBLY THAT YAHYA WOULD BE TRIED AFTER PAKISTANI PRISONERS OF WAR HAVE BEEN REPATRIATED, WHEN THE TRIAL WOULD BECOME

A DOMESTIC ISSUE WITHOUT INTERNATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS. ASSEMBLY SCHEDULED TO DISCUSS PRICE INCREASES ON JUNE 4, WITH BUDGET TO BE SUBMITTED JUNE 9.

3. COMMENT: RELATIVE LULL IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY WHICH HAS EXISTED SINCE PASSAGE OF CONSTITUTION APRIL 10 HAS BEEN SHATTERED AS GOVERNMENT PARTIES AND POLITICAL OPPOSITION RESUME THEIR HAMMER-AND-TONG VERBAL CONFLICT IN ASSEMBLY. NUMEROUS ARRESTS OF LOW-LEVEL OPPOSITION POLITICAL FIGURES, UNRELENTING LEGAL AND EXTRA-LEGAL HARASSMENT OF OPPOSITION, AND CONTINUED DISSATISFACTION OVER GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF SITUATION IN BALUCHISTAN HAVE REVIVED FEARS THAT COUNTRY IS AGAIN FAILING IN ITS EFFORTS MAKE PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY WORK AND THAT PAKISTAN IS MOVING TOWARDS A ONE-PARTY STATE; HENCE OPPOSITION OBSTRUCTIONISM IN ASSEMBLY AND A GENERAL HARDENING OF OPPOSITION POSITIONS ON MOST ISSUES. INFLATIONARY SPIRAL MAY BECOME NEXT FOCUS OF POLITICAL TENSION. INDEED, SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOURCES IN CAPITAL ARE SAYING BHUTTO HAS SHELVED PLANS FOR EARLY GENERAL ELECTIONS BECAUSE OF RISING POPULAR DISCONTENT OVER PRICE INCREASES IN MAY BASIC CONSUMER GOODS. SANDERHOFF

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 JUN 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973ISLAMA04482
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730624/aaaajgrn.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 ISLAMABAD 4264
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <10-Jan-2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> wfs 980213
Subject: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET SESSION: FIRST WEEK
TAGS: PINT, PK
To: KARACHI
LAHORE
NEA
NEW DELHI
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

